AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1.   (Original)   A computer-implemented method for playing a game, the method comprising:

receiving a request from a first player to enable gate crashing in the game;

in response to the request from the first player, transmitting information to a remote computer;

in response to transmitting the information to the remote computer, receiving a request from a second player to participate in the game; and

in response to the request from the second player to participate in the game, transitioning control of a character in the game from a program routine to the second player.

2.   (Original)   The method of claim 1 wherein transmitting information to the remote computer includes transmitting information about the game to the remote computer.

3.   (Original)   The method of claim 1 wherein transmitting information to the remote computer includes transmitting information about the first player to the remote computer.

4.   (Original)   The method of claim 1 wherein receiving a request from a second player to participate in the game includes receiving a non-player character selection from the second player.

5.   (Original)   The method of claim 1 wherein transitioning control of a character in the game from a program routine to the second player includes transitioning control without signaling the first player.

6.   (Original)   A computer-implemented method for playing a game, the method comprising:

receiving a request from a first player to initiate the game in single-player mode;

receiving a first control input from the first player;

controlling a first character in response to the first control input received from the first player;

controlling a second character in response to computer-readable instructions;

receiving a request from a second player to control the second character;

in response to the request from the second player, transitioning control of the second character from the computer-readable instructions to the second player;

receiving a second control input from the second player; and

controlling the second character in response to the second control input received from the second player.

7.   (Original)   The method of claim 6 wherein receiving a first control input from the first player includes receiving a first control input via a first game console operably connected to a first gaming system, and wherein receiving a second control input from the second player includes receiving a second control input via a second game console operably connected to a second gaming system remote from the first gaming system.

8.   (Original)   The method of claim 6 wherein transitioning control of the second character from the computer-readable instructions to the second player includes transitioning control in the absence of notifying the first player.

9.   (Original)   The method of claim 6, further comprising:

receiving a third control input from the second player; and

if the second character is still active in the game, controlling the second game character in response to the third control input received from the second player; and

if the second character is no longer active in the game, controlling a third game character in response to the third control input received from the second player.

10.   (Original)   A computer-implemented method for playing a game, the method comprising:

receiving information about one or more games from a remote computer;

displaying at least a portion of the received information about the games;

receiving a request to gate crash at least one of the games; and

in response to receiving the request to gate crash, transmitting the request to the remote computer.

11.   (Original)   The method of claim 10 wherein receiving information about one or more games from a remote computer includes receiving information about one or more non-player characters participating in the games, and wherein the method further comprises receiving a character selection corresponding to at least one of the one or more non-player characters.

12.   (Original)   The method of claim 10, further comprising sorting the information about the games, and wherein displaying at least a portion of the received information includes displaying at least a portion of the sorted information.

13.   (Original)   The method of claim 10, further comprising in response to transmitting the request to gate crash to the remote computer, implementing a peer-to-peer connection with a remote gaming system.

14.   (Original)   A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing steps comprising:

receiving a request from a first player to enable gate crashing in a game;

in response to the request from the first player, transmitting information to a remote computer;

in response to transmitting the information to the remote computer, receiving a request from a second player to participate in the game; and

in response to the request from the second player to participate in the game, transitioning control of a character in the game from a program routine to the second player.

15.   (Original)   The computer-readable medium of claim 14 wherein transmitting information to the remote computer includes transmitting information about the first player to the remote computer.

16.   (Original)   The computer-readable medium of claim 14 wherein transmitting information to the remote computer includes transmitting information about the game to the remote computer.

17.   (Original)   The computer-readable medium of claim 14 wherein receiving a request from a second player to participate in the game includes receiving a character selection from the second player.

18.   (Original)   The computer-readable of claim 14 wherein the first player controls a first character, and wherein transitioning control of a character in the game from a program routine to the second player includes transitioning control of a second character, and wherein the steps further comprise:

receiving a first control input from the first player via a first game console operably connected to a first gaming system;

controlling the first character in response to the first control input received from the first player;

receiving a second control input from the second player via a second game console operably connected to a second gaming system remote from the first gaming system; and

controlling the second character in response to the second control input received from the second player.

19.   (Original)   The computer-readable medium of claim 18 wherein the steps further comprise:

receiving a third control input from the second player; and

if the second character is still active in the game, controlling the second game character in response to the third control input received from the second player; and

if the second character is no longer active in the game, controlling a third game character in response to the third control input received from the second player.

20.   (Original)   A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing steps comprising:

receiving information about a game being played on a first gaming system;

transmitting the information about the game to a second gaming system remote from the first gaming system;

receiving a request from the second gaming system to gate crash the game; and

in response to receiving the request from the second gaming system, establishing a peer-to-peer connection between the first and second gaming systems.

21.   (Original)   The computer-readable medium of claim 20 wherein receiving information about a game includes receiving information about a console-based game.

22.   (Original)   The computer-readable medium of claim 20 wherein receiving information about a game includes receiving information about a console-based game, and wherein receiving a request from the second gaming system to join the console-based game includes receiving a character selection from the second gaming system.

23.   (Original)   The computer-readable medium of claim 20 wherein the steps further comprise:

transmitting information about the game to a third gaming system;

receiving a request from the third gaming system to join the game; and

in response to receiving the request from the third gaming system, establishing a peer-to-peer connection between the first and third gaming systems.

24.   (Original)   A computer-based system for implementing a game, the system comprising:

means for receiving a request from a first player to allow control of a game character to be transitioned from a program routine to a remote player;

means for transmitting game-related information to a remote computer in response to the request from the first player; and

means for receiving a request from a second player to participate in the game in response to transmitting the information to the remote computer.

25.   (Original)   The system of claim 24 wherein the means for receiving a request from a first player include means for receiving a request from a first player to allow control of a game character to be transitioned from a program routine to a remote player during the game without the knowledge of the first player.

26.   (Original)   The system of claim 24 wherein the first player controls a first game character, and wherein the system further comprises means for enabling the second

player to control a second character in response to the request from the second player to participate in the game.

27.   (Original)   The system of claim 24 wherein the first player controls a first game character, and wherein the system further comprises means for transitioning control of a second character from a program routine to the second player in response to the request from the second player to participate in the game.

28.   (Original)   The system of claim 24 wherein the means for receiving a request from a second player to participate in the game include means for receiving a character selection from the second player.

29.   (Original)   The system of claim 24, further comprising:
means for receiving a first control input from the first player;
means for controlling a first character in response to the first control input received
        from the first player;
means for controlling a second character in response to computer-readable
        instructions;
means for receiving a second control input from the second player; and
means for controlling the second character in response to the second control input
        received from the second player.

30.   (Original)   The system of claim 24, further comprising means for establishing a peer-to-peer connection between a first gaming system on which the first player is playing and a second gaming system on which the second player is playing.

31.   (Original)   The system of claim 24 wherein the means for transmitting game-related information include means for transmitting information about a console-based game from a first gaming system to a second gaming system.

32.   (Original)   A computer-readable medium including a screen display, the screen display comprising:

at least one gate crasher selection field configured to receive an input from a first user, wherein the first user input enables control of at least one character in a related game to be transitioned from a program routine to a second player.

33.   (Original)   The computer-readable medium of claim 32 wherein the screen display further comprises:

at least one gate crasher attribute field configured to receive a user input establishing at least one attribute of potential gate crashers in the related game.

34.   (Original)   The computer-readable medium of claim 32 wherein the screen display further comprises:

a gate crasher skill level field configured to receive a user input establishing a skill level of potential gate crashers in the related game.

35.   (Original)   The computer-readable medium of claim 32 wherein the screen display further comprises:

a gate crasher alias field configured to receive a user input identifying an alias of at least one potential gate crasher in the related game.

36.   (Original)   A computer-readable medium including a screen display, the screen display comprising:

at least one gate crasher selection field configured to receive a user input, wherein the user input enables the user to assume control of a character being controlled by a program routine in a related game being played on a remote gaming system.

37.   (Original)   The computer-readable medium of claim 36 wherein the screen display further comprises:

one or more fields configured to receive game filtering criteria.

38.   (Original)   The computer-readable medium of claim 36 wherein the screen display further comprises:

a game type field configured to receive a user input indicating a type of game the user desires to crash.

39.   (Original)   The computer-readable medium of claim 36 wherein the screen display further comprises:

a skill level field configured to receive a user input indicating a skill level of host players with which the user wishes to compete.

40.   (Original)   The computer-readable medium of claim 36 wherein the screen display further comprises:

an alias field configured to receive a user input indicating an alias of a host player with which the user wishes to compete.